HARAMBEE FLAME

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BUSING: LESS THAN A BARGAIN

At present, several media-appointed spokespersons for U.S. blacks are sitting on the edge of their seats wondering whether their lame duck will sign into law or veto the appropriations bill which has attached to it the Helms' rider prohibiting the expenditure of funds by the Justice Dept. for purposes of seeking school desegregation through busing. Like puppies at the Master's door, these spokespersons are imploring Carter to save "civil rights progress from being set back twenty years." The ghost of Brown v. Board of Education looms tearfully before their weary eyes. That decision, as well we know by now, simply made it unlawful for school boards to maintain segregated schools. And it did so with the correct assumption that segregated schools would necessarily be unequal schools. Non-whites naturally applauded this decision and proceeded to steadfastly work to end the maintenance of segregated school systems.

This was a noble cause. But something went haywire. Somehow or other we got side-tracked. What had originally been a concern about the fact that black children were being educationally cheated became an obsession with racial integration. Just as bourgeois blacks developed a craving for white values and, often, for white neighborhoods, they developed a corresponding obsession with the "proper upbringing" of their children via white schools. Gee whiz! They didn't want their children to be culturally deprived!

While our "leaders" are sitting on the edge of their seats hoping that Carter will be good to his negroes, the rest of us would do well to use this break in the action for some serious thought as to what our priorities are. When it comes to the education of black children, are we really thinking about their best interests, or are we merely being led around by our noses by those who claim to speak for us? Through busing, black children are being subjected to the psychological, and sometimes physical, abuse characteristic of an alien environment in which some(white) are favored while others(non-white) are disdained.

What kind of bargain is this in which, at the risk of injury(psychological or physical) to our children, we get the dubious benefits of "cultural exchange"? No doubt, busing gives our children access to less ragged(than in our poor communities) school facilities, more modern teaching materials, and a situation in which white teachers are less likely to put out less than 100%(as might be expected of many of them were they teaching in predominantly black schools). This is only a bargain if we happen to be working under the assumption that the U.S. public school system fundamentally is okay, that it is meeting our needs.

If the public school system is fundamentally okay, then busing is valid as a means of getting our children a piece of "the pie." Though the white and bourgeois black jury may still be out, the fact is that the evidence is most assuredly in. And that evidence makes an airtight case for the charge that the U.S. school system has assaulted all its students--regardless of race, color, creed, or national origin--with mind manipulation/programming, while it has consistently avoided educating. The school system's process of training its students to accept certain racist, sexist, classist, and other assumptions is what is poisoning our children's minds. And the more we examine this issue, the more we will understand that our problems have nothing to do with a bus but with who is in the driver's seat.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

On the formation of a Black Political Party:

"More than 1,300 Blacks from throughout the country gathered here Nov. 21-23 to form the National Black Independent Political Party(NBIPP).... Delegates to the gathering represented a broad political spectrum including left forces, Democratic Party politicians, nationalists, grassroots organizers and middle-class professionals....While participants represented 27 states, 70% were from Pennsylvania, New York and the Washington, D.C. area....'The party's goal is to advance a new Black politics of social transformation and self-determination for the Black nation,' according to an NBIPP statement. 'We will be creating a popular, mass-based, community-building, nation-building party designed to engage in infrastructural and institutional development in the Black community. We will engage in community organizing and mobilization around issues of concern to the Black community. The party will be an instrument for lobbying around private and public policy and electoral politics. It will advance the interest of Blacks, and poor people in general.'....The decision to form an independent Black political party was made after intense debate and struggle at the fourth convention of the National Black Political Assembly in New Orleans, La., last August. The NBPA traces its history to the 1972 Black political conference in Gary, Ind., where thousands of Black workers and political activists endorsed a radical, anti-capitalist direction for the Black liberation struggle....In addition, Marable told reporters at a convention news conference that Black people cannot be liberated unless Black women are structurally and organically in the leadership of that struggle.. ..Speakers at the convention included Rev. Chavis, Black poet Haki Madhabuti, Marable, Ron Daniels, Barbara Sizemore, and Queen Mother Moore."-GUARDIAN

On the Elections:

"In the overall vote(52%, the lowest since 1948 when only 51.6% voted) Reagan carried 51% to Carter's 41% with independent Anderson getting 7%. The low turnout hurt Carter and the Democrats generally as it traditionally does. But Carter also received only 60% of labor's vote, as compared to 68% in 1976 against Ford....Blacks were the only part of the traditional Democratic coalition of liberal, labor, Blacks to turn out in any significant way...."-CHANGES

On So-called 'Soul Food':

"Black Americans are under the illusion that their cultural food is soul food. This misconception about soul food has been perpetuated from generation to generation....Before being Black Americans, Negroes, or even slaves, we were West Africans. As West Africans, we enjoyed the various foods from the land provided for us by our mother country. These foods helped keep the Africans healthy and strong....With the arrival of the Europeans, West Africans' health and dietary habits started to deteriorate. ...Along with the cruel and inhuman treatment given to animals, came the food fed to animals....The diet on the slave ships consisted of horse-beans, Indian corn, yams, and rice, all ground up into mush. Most eventually died from malnutrition and those who survived found themselves with numerous deficiencies and illnesses.... Once in America, the Africans found themselves cruelly examined, sold and carried off to a plantation. Stripped of their native land, families, culture, lifestyle, and foods, the Africans were forced to live and eat like animals....The slave owners only provided such foods as white refined rice, corn meal, potatoes, pig fat, salt pork, grits and sweet potatoes. ...The African slaves eventually adopted and culturally justified these foods and called them their own.... After slavery, Black Americans continued to eat these foods, believing

them to be their native food, but it is nothing more than slave food.... (1) High blood pressure is 50% more prevalent in Blacks than in whites. (2) Blacks suffer from more strokes at an earlier age with more severe results than for whites. (3) 32% of the Black females and 31% of the Black males suffer from hypertension. (4) The cancer mortality rate for Blacks has increased 25%, while for whites it has increased only 5%! (5) The overall cancer rate for Blacks went up 8%, while for whites it went down 3%! (6) Blacks have a significantly higher rate of hypertensive heart disease, thus causing a higher mortality rate than for Whites....Recent studies by Dr. Dennis Burkitt show how today's rural Africans do not suffer from such western diseases as cancer, appendicitis, constipation, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, strokes, diabetes, and diverticulitis. Rural Africans still consume the foods and crops of their ancestors....The following foods are recommended for those who wish to take the turn back towards the unrefined foods of their African ancestors: (1) raw and dried fruits; (2) vegetables of all kinds, cooked as little as possible; (3) grains--brown unrefined rice, millet, barley, buckwheat groats, oats, corn, rye and wheat berries; (4) beans of all kinds; (5) nuts and seeds; (6) cut down on meat eating, cut out all fatty parts of meat, chicken, turkey, and white fish are leanest; (7) whole grain bread and bran. ..."-BLACK COLLEGIAN

A MESSAGE OF CONCERN

What the black person in America must be aware of is that the doctrine of white supremacy, which is part of the ideology of the world system the American power structure is trying to preserve, lets the black person in for the greatest portion of the suffering and hate which white supremacy has dished out to the non-white people of the world historically.

To battle the colonialism of white supremacy the non-white people of the world must gain organizational unity and communication with their allies around the world. Our brothers in the nations of Asia, Latin America, and Africa are moving in leaps and bounds toward political and social independence, while we are still battling for token integration.

To support our brothers nationwide we have to confront the American government with steps such as these:

- -Oppose U.S. intervention in El Salvadore, Nicaragua, Grenada, or Iran.
- -Support Puerto Rico's right to national independence.
- -Support efforts to increase cultural and educational contacts between the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the U.S.

Each step taken will guide our path toward ultimate victory over racism and exploitation.

-Ray W. Daniel
President
Afro-Amer. Collegiate Society

ABOUT H.A.C.O.

The Harambee Afro-Cultural Organization is an in-prison group which exists for the purpose of instilling in our membership sufficient knowledge of them/ourselves and conditions and developments in the world so that we can make a positive difference in the world. We attempt to meet the requirements of this objective by providing educational programs covering a variety of issues of concern to black people. We also make use of cultural "entertainment."

H.A.C.O. meets every Monday at the Neb. State Pen at 14th. & Pioneer in Lincoln. We welcome guests from outside these walls to share knowledge and understanding with us. If you wish to come check us out, contact our sponsor, Scott Marshall, at 471-3161, ext. 314 or 396; or notify either Chairman Chico Wilson or Educ. Chrmn. David Rice by mail.

BEATRICE

wide eyes stand out white
ping pong ball blank
and white against a dark face
black sticks hold her up
as i
so unmercifully amused
fell from my chair to the floor
in a fit of laughter
laughter is catchy
it caught the room
cruel humor at her expense
cuz you couldn't not be pretty then
you couldn't be dark and
skinny besides
and so why should SHE have
had vacation
how could SHE have
had fun
and we kids played adult on her
played grown-up
we played
if-you're-black-get-back
quibbling over shades
as we
black ourselves
went on rampage
lynching her in our own way
and hating ourselves as we played.

-David L. Rice

GLIMPSES OF AFRICA

1. Croix du Sud

I went looking for the Southern Cross
All through the sultry African night,
Scanned the sky seeking to decipher
Mysteries of my tawny skin and
crinkled hair.
Listened for the drumbeat
that would tell me This was home.

With what hunger I searched
The secret skies over Dakar
Looking for my truth!

2. Pale Ochre

Father, Mother, I am home.
I have come back, my sister, my brother.
Why don't your talking drums
announce my return,
Signalling their welcome
from village to village,
Hill to hill?
Don't you recognize me?
Why do the little ones stare
in jubilant wonder,
Gleefully clapping their hands
and chanting,
"Onyibo, onyibo!" as to a stranger?

3. L'Enfant

Hungry and cold, I nestled
against your ample breasts
But your milk was strong
and bitter to my mouth
And I pulled away unsatisfied.

Like a child I sought the comfort
of your lap,
But you turned your back
to my outstretched arms.

When I cried, thinking myself rejected so,
You knew for sure I was a stranger.

It was not that you did not offer yourself;
It was only that I could not recognize
The form and power of your gift.

-Naomi Long Andrews

(Note: In Nigeria ONYIBO identifies a person as Caucasian although he may be of mixed blood or lighter skin color.)

LIFE HYTHMS

. . . . . .
.Do you know that the editor has to .
.threaten people with curses and hexes.
.to get them to submit poetry and .
.other writing for appearance in this .
.newsletter? And do you know what .
.else? That gets to be a drag. He .
.can't think of a nicer way of putting.
.this: If you write, get up off your .
.butt and send something in! .
. .
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